

A Corinthian Sensorium:
Paul's Use of the Senses in his Corinthian Correspondence
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Dr. Alisha Paddock

1 Cor 12:17

- If the whole body were an eye, where is the sense of hearing (ἡ ἀκοή)? If the whole (body) were hearing, where is the sense of smell (ἡ ὀσφρηρίς)?

Paul's Corinthian sensorium

- Tasting
- Touching
- Kinaesthesia
- Smelling
- Hearing
- Seeing
- Knowing

Sense of Knowing

Verbs of “knowing”	Times used	Examples
οἶδα – to know, be acquainted, understand, experience	1 Cor – 24 2 Cor – 11	1 Cor 9:24 – Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it.
γινώσκω –to know, ascertain, comprehend, perceive, recognize	1 Cor – 13 2 Cor – 7	2 Cor 3:2 -- You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all;

1 Cor 2:11

- For who **knows** (οἶδεν) the things of mankind except the spirit of mankind which is in him? Thus also no one **knows** (ἔγνωκεν) the things of God except the spirit of God.

Sense of Knowing

Verbs of “knowing”	Times used	Examples
λογίζομαι - to reckon, calculate, consider, think	1 Cor – 3 2 Cor – 7	2 Cor 12:6 – For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain <i>from this</i> , so that no one will credit me with more than he sees <i>in</i> me or hears from me.
φρονέω – to hold an opinion, judge, set one’s mind on, have thoughts on/	1 Cor – 1 2 Cor – 1	1 Cor 13:11 -- When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.
σωφρονέω – be reasonable, sensible, keep one’s head, be in one’s right mind	2 Cor – 1	2 Cor 5:13 – For if we have lost our minds, <i>it is</i> for God; if we are of sound mind , <i>it is</i> for you.
ἄγνοέω – to not know, be ignorant	1 Cor – 3 2 Cor – 3	2 Cor 1:8 – We do not want you to be uninformed , brothers and sisters, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself.

Sense of Knowing

Nouns of “knowing”	Times used	Examples
γνῶσις - knowledge	1 Cor – 9 2 Cor – 6	2 Cor 8:7 -- Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge , in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.
νοῦς - mind	1 Cor – 7 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 14:14-15, 19 – For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unproductive. What is <i>the outcome</i> then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit, but I will sing with the mind also. ... nevertheless, in church I prefer to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.
νοήμα - thoughts	1 Cor – 0 2 Cor – 5	2 Cor 3:14 -- But their thoughts were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside.
φρήν – thinking, understanding	1 Cor – 2 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 14:20 -- Brothers and sisters, do not be children in your thinking ; rather, be infants in evil, but in thinking be adults.
ἄφρων/ἄφροσύνη – unthinking (fool, foolish, foolishness)	1 Cor – 1 2 Cor – 8	2 Cor 11:19 – For you gladly put up with fools , being wise yourselves!

Paul's use of synaesthesia

- 1 Cor 7:16 – Now concerning that which you wrote: It is good for a man to not touch a woman” . . . For do **you know** (οἶδας) wives, if you will save the husband? Or do **you know** (οἶδας) husbands, if you will save the wife?
- 2 Cor 2:14-16 -- But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us reveals the aroma of the **knowledge** of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing: to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

Paul's use of synaesthesia

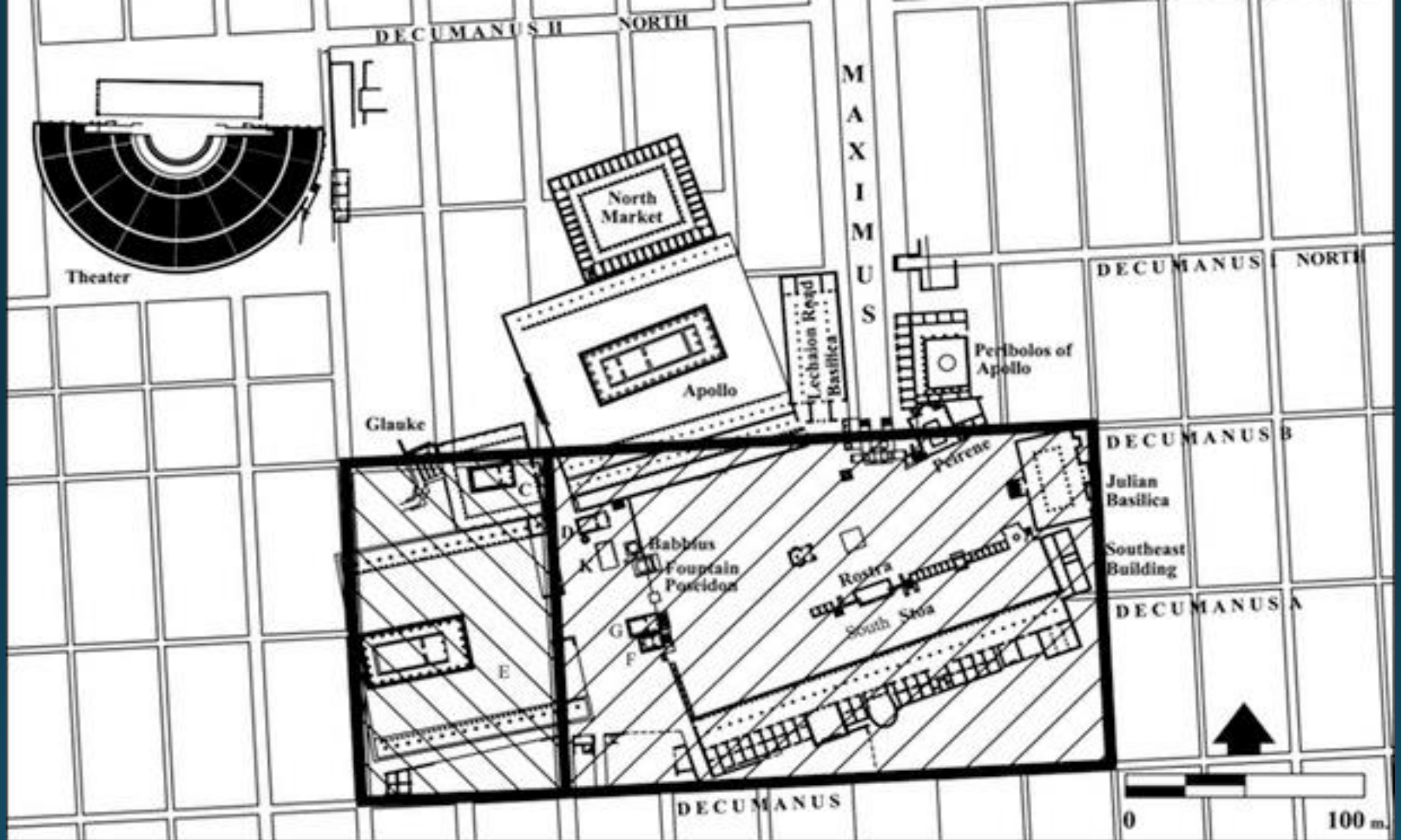
- **2 Cor 12:6** – For if I do wish to boast **I will not be foolish**, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain *from this*, so that **no one will credit** me with more than he sees *in* me or hears from me.
- **2 Cor 4:4, 6** – among whom the god of this age blinded **the minds** of the unbelievers, in order that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, not shine forth... For it is God who said, “Out of darkness light will shine,” who shone in our hearts the illumination of the **knowledge** of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Sense of Seeing

Words associated with “seeing”	Times used	Examples
ὄφθαλμός -- eye	1 Cor – 5 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 15:52 -- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye , at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.
Βλέπω – to see, consider, take care, look at	1 Cor – 7 2 Cor – 7	2 Cor 10: 7 -- Look at what is before your face. If you are confident that you belong to Christ, remind yourself of this, that just as you belong to Christ, so also do we.
ὄραω – to see, witness, appear	1 Cor – 8 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 15:8 -- Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.
ἰδοῦ – behold!	1 Cor – 1 2 Cor – 5	2 Cor 5:17 -- So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see , everything has become new!
φωτίζω – to illuminate, shine, reveal	1 Cor – 1 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 4:5 -- Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.
τυφλόω – to blind	1 Cor – 0 2 Cor – 1	2 Cor 4:4 – In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Sense of Hearing

Words associated with "hearing"	Times used	Examples
οὔς – ear	1 Cor – 2 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 12:16 – And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye , I am not <i>a part of the body</i> ," it is not for this reason any less <i>a part of the body</i> .
ἀκούω -- to hear, listen, report, be informed, understand	1 Cor – 4 2 Cor – 2	1 Cor 11:18 – For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it.
ἀκοή – the act of hearing, that which is heard	1 Cor – 1 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 12:17 – If the whole body were an eye , where would the hearing be? If the whole (body) were hearing , where would the sense of smell be?
φωνή – sound, tone, noise, voice, language	1 Cor – 4 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 14:11 – If then I do not know (οἶδα) the meaning of a sound , I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me.
φθόγγος – sound, tone	1 Cor – 1 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 14:7 – Yet <i>even lifeless instruments</i> , whether flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones , how will it be known (γινώσκω) what is played on the flute or on the harp?
εἰσκούω – to listen, obey	1 Cor – 1 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 14:21 – In the law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people; yet even then they will not listen to me ," says the Lord.
ὑπακοή/ὑπήκοος – obedience/obedient	1 Cor – 0 2 Cor – 4	2 Cor 10:5 – and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive into obedience of Christ.



Roman Corinth in early 1st Century BCE
 Courtesy, D.G. Romano, Corinth Computer Project

Sense of Un-Hearing

Words associated with "hearing"	Times used	Examples
ἄφρωνος – silent, mute	1 Cor – 2 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 12:2 – You know (οἶδατε) that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to mute idols.
σιγάω – to silence	1 Cor – 3 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 14: 28 – but if there is no interpreter, he is to keep silent in church; and have him speak to himself and to God.
παρακοή – unwillingness to hear, disobedience	1 Cor – 0 2 Cor – 1	2 Cor 10: 6 – We are ready to punish every disobedience when your obedience is complete.

Sense of Smell

Words associated with "smell"	Times used	Examples
ὄσφρησις – sense of smell, organ of smell (nose)	1 Cor – 0 2 Cor – 1	1 Cor 12:17 – If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole <i>body</i> were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?
ὄσμή – odor, aroma	1 Cor – 0 2 Cor – 2	2 Cor 2:14, 16 – But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us reveals the aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place...to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?
Εὐωδία – fragrance	1 Cor – 0 2 Cor – 1	2 Cor 2:15 -- For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing

Sense of Touch

Words associated with "touch"	Times used	Examples
ἅπτω – to touch	1 Cor – 1 2 Cor – 1	1 Cor 7:1 -- Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is well for a man not to touch a woman." 2 Cor 6:17 – Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you
χείρ – hand	1 Cor – 4 2 Cor – 1	1 Cor 4:12 – and we grow weary from the work of our own hands . When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; 1 Cor 12: 15, 21 – If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand , I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.... The eye cannot say to the hand , "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 1 Cor 16:21 -- I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand . 2 Cor 11:33 – but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands .

Sense of Taste

Words associated with "taste"	Times used	Examples
γεύομαι -- to taste	1 Cor – 0 2 Cor - 0	

Words associated with "eating"	Times used	Examples
(συν)ἔσθίω – to eat, dine with	1 Cor – 27 2 Cor – 0	dining with unbelievers (eating meat sacrificed to an idol) Dining with believers (Lord's Supper)
πίνω – to drink	1 Cor – 14 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 10:21 -- You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.
ποτίζω – to give a drink, to water	1 Cor – 5 2 Cor – 0	1 Cor 12:13 -- For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
νηστεία – fasting, hunger	1 Cor – 0 2 Cor – 2	2 Cor 6:4-5 -- But as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance.....beatings, imprisonment, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger
καταπίνω – to swallow	1 Cor – 1 2 Cor – 2	2 Cor 5:4 – For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Sense of Kinaesthesia

Words associated with "kinaesthesia"	Times used	Examples
σῶμα		
ποῦς		
θριαμβεύω		

Avalos' "differential privileging"

- (1) contrasting expressions of valuation ('hearing is better than seeing')
- (2) expressions of antipathy toward particular senses
- (3) narratives about the performance of valued tasks and functions in the absence or diminution of certain senses